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National Youth-at-Risk Center Approved

March 12, 2013

A new National Youth-at-Risk (NYAR) Center at the College of Education was just approved by Georgia Southern University President Brooks Keel.

The NYAR Center is an important addition to the College of Education and our mission,” said COE Dean Tom Koballa. “It places COE in the forefront of fostering research and providing professionals with the latest educational programs and strategies to assist youth in overcoming at-risk conditions,” he continued.

The NYAR Center will develop, coordinate and extend the ongoing efforts of COE to provide professional development, research support and resource assistance for educators serving youth placed at risk within the geographical service area of Georgia Southern and beyond, according to Professor Dan Rea, co-chair of the NYAR Conference.

The NYAR Center takes its name from the NYAR Conference, now in its 24th year, which concluded last week in Savannah. More than 1100 attendees throughout the U.S. and internationally have been attending the three-day conference.

The Center will extend three of COE’s current efforts to address the needs of educators to serve youth placed at risk: the annual NYAR Conference, the annual Southeast Conference on Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the Closing the Achievement Gap for Educators (Gap) Website. Through cutting-edge research efforts, the center will also make it possible for Georgia Southern University and the College of Education to play important roles in enabling educators to find research-based solutions to what is both a regional and national educational problem.

Youth-at-risk signifies the urgency and seriousness of societal “risks” faced by today’s youth and is distinct from “at-risk youth.” The NYAR Conference and new Center focuses on the “risky” conditions that threaten youth’s well-being which include a range of factors including poverty, racism, drugs, school violence, gangs, bullying, negative peer pressure, negative school climate, lack of relevant curriculum, passive instructional strategies, disregard for individual learning differences, ineffective discipline systems, low teacher expectations, unqualified teachers, inadequate counseling, teen pregnancy, sexual harassment and dysfunctional home life.

Pictured: Dan Rea (left) and Eric Landers, co-directors of the National Youth-at-Risk Conference.